



Trump supporters' threats to judge spur democracy concerns



An aerial view of former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate is seen, Aug. 10, 2022, in Palm Beach, Fla.

Associated Press

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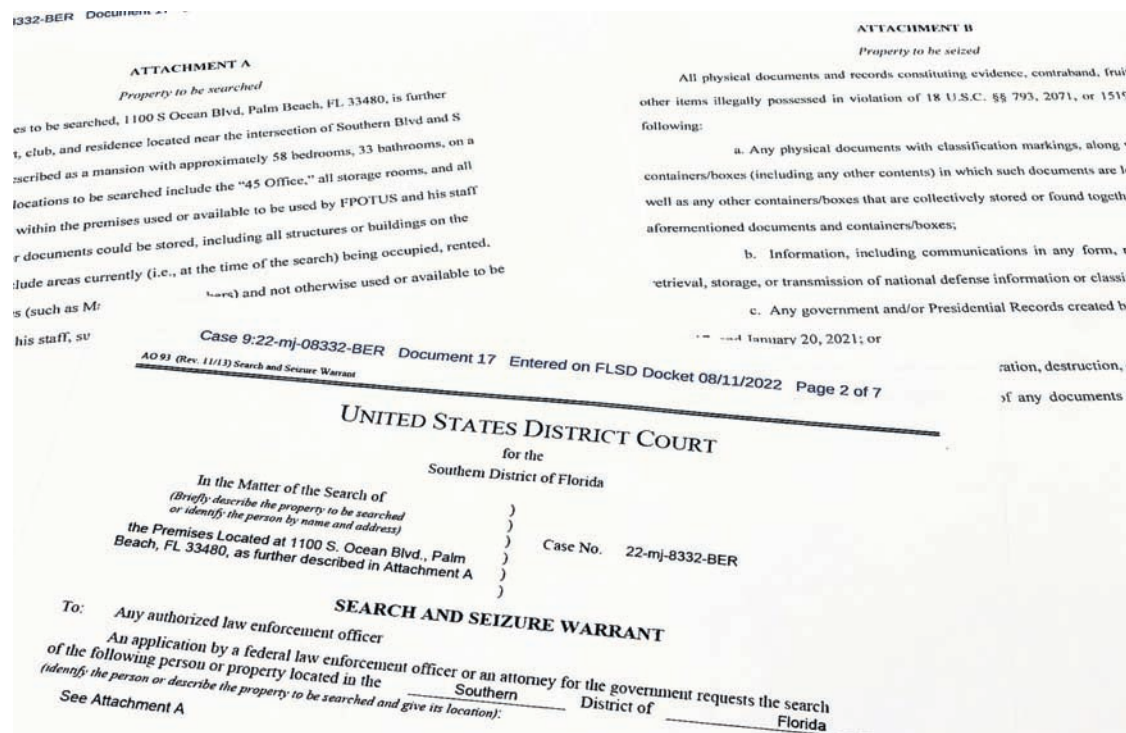
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Trump supporters' threats to judge spur democracy concerns

By **GARY FIELDS** and **NICHOLAS RICCARDI**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hundreds of federal judges face the same task every day: review an affidavit submitted by federal agents and approve requests for a search warrant. But for U.S. Magistrate Judge Bruce Reinhart, the fallout from his decision to approve a search warrant has been far from routine. He has faced a storm of death threats since his signature earlier this month cleared the way for the FBI to search former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate as part of a probe into whether he inappropriately removed sensitive materials from the White House. Reinhart's home address was posted on right-wing sites, along with antisemitic slurs. The South Florida synagogue he attends canceled its Friday night Shabbat services in the wake of the uproar. Trump has done little to lower the temperature among his supporters, decrying the search as political persecution and calling on Reinhart to recuse himself in the case because he has previously made political donations to Democrats. Reinhart has also, however, contributed to Republicans. The threats against Reinhart are part of a broader attack on law enforcement, particularly the FBI, by Trump and his allies in the aftermath of the search. But experts warn that the focus on a judge, coming amid an uptick in threats to the judiciary in general, is dangerous for the rule of law in the U.S. and the country's viability as a democracy. "Threats against judges fulfilling their constitutional responsibilities strike at the very core of our democracy," U.S. Second Circuit Judge Richard J. Sullivan, chair of the Judicial Conference Committee on Judicial Security, said in a statement issued recently in the aftermath of the search. "Judges should not have to fear retaliation for doing their jobs."



The FBI's unsealed search warrant for former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Fla., is photographed Friday, Aug. 12, 2022.

Associated Press

A phone message left in Reinhart's chambers was not immediately returned. He will preside over a hearing Thursday on a request by media organizations, including The Associated Press, seeking to unseal the underlying affidavit the Justice Department submitted when it asked for the Mar-a-Lago search warrant. Asked to comment about measures it has taken to protect Reinhart and his family the U.S. Marshals Service said in a statement "while we do not discuss our specific security measures, we continuously review the measures in place and take appropriate steps to provide protection as necessary to ensure the integrity of the federal judicial process." The vitriol directed at the magistrate, while striking, is becoming increasingly common. In 2014, the U.S. Marshals Service handled 768 incidents that it classified as "inappropriate communications" aimed at judges and court employees. Last year, it reported more than 4,500. At one point "virtually everyone recognized how inappropriate it was to threaten the life or security of a judge because of a disagreement with the judge's decision," said Barbara Lynn, chief judge for the northern district of

Texas. "Now I think there are a lot of people that don't think there's anything wrong with that." Lynn is one of many judicial officials pushing Congress to approve the Daniel Anderson bill, named for the 20-year-old son of District Judge Esther Salas. He was killed in 2020 when a gunman came to their New Jersey home. His father was wounded. The bill, which has the support of groups ranging from the American Bar Association to the National Association of Attorneys General, would keep more of judges' personal information private. In June, a retired Wisconsin county circuit judge, John Roemer was killed in his home in what authorities said was a targeted killing by a gunman, who fatally wounded himself as well. Later that month, protesters converged on the homes of conservative U.S. Supreme Court justices after they overturned a 49-year-old ruling that women have a constitutional right to obtain an abortion. Police arrested a man with knives, zip ties and a gun near the home of Justice Brett Kavanaugh and he said he planned to kill the conservative justice. Congress rapidly approved money to bolster security at the justices' homes and

provide 24-hour protection to their families. The increased targeting of judges comes as trust in public institutions plummets and partisan rhetoric escalates. It's part of a pattern that Steven Levitsky has seen before. "This is a classic precursor of a democratic breakdown," said Levitsky, a Harvard political scientist and co-author of *How Democracies Die*. "To call this a warning sign is an understatement." Trump's initial presidential campaign — during which he personally condemned a judge who ruled against him in a lawsuit over his now-defunct Trump University — changed the ground rules governing threats and explosive rhetoric, said Matthew Weil, executive director of the Democracy Initiative at the Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington, DC. "There are threats everywhere now, it's become more normalized because he changed what was allowed in public discourse," Weil said, who said both the right and the left have turned to threatening the judicial branch. Nathan Hall, a principal consultant with the National Center for State Courts, noted that the combination of lagging public trust, coupled with access to judges' addresses and per-

sonal information impacts everyone from nationally-known Supreme Court justices to otherwise anonymous state judges. "This gets to the core issue of having equal access to justice, a core foundational principle of our ability to function as a third and independent branch of government. It's really shaken to the core," Hall said. "Judges are just people at the end of the day. They put on a robe, but they still go home to their families." The most recent warning sign came after last week's search of Mar-a-Lago, Trump's Florida resort and political and personal headquarters. FBI agents seized 11 sets of classified information as part of an investigation of three different federal laws, including one that governs gathering, transmitting or losing defense information under the Espionage Act, according to court records. Trump accused the government of abuse of power in targeting him, and his supporters railed against the search online, targeting the FBI and Department of Justice. An armed man who posted threats against the FBI on Trump's Truth Social network was killed by authorities after trying to storm the agency's Cincinnati office. Still, Trump and his supporters have waged rhetorical war against the FBI for years since the investigation into whether his initial campaign was aided by Russia in 2016. The intense focus on an individual judge like Reinhart is relatively new. Gretchen Helmke, a political scientist at the University of Rochester, said Trump's action mirrors what demagogues have done in other countries where democracy has collapsed. "A popularly elected leader targeting a judiciary is often one early indicator of democratic erosion," Helmke said in an email. Helmke cited Venezuela, Bolivia and Peru as places where an incoming administration vowed to clean up the judiciary, then stocked it with its followers. □



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Pence tells GOP to stop lashing out at FBI over Trump search

By HOLLY RAMER

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) —

Former Vice President Mike Pence on Wednesday implored fellow Republicans to stop lashing out at the FBI over the search of Donald Trump's Florida home and denounced calls by some of the former president's allies to defund the FBI, saying that was "just as wrong" as a push by Democratic activists to shift money from police.

Pence also said he would give "due consideration" if asked to testify before the House committee investigating the riot at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

His pleas for restraint come as law enforcement officials warn of an escalating number of violent threats targeting federal agents and government facilities since agents last week searched Mar-a-Lago as part of the Justice Department's investigation into the discovery of classified White House records recovered from Trump's estate earlier this year.

Speaking in New Hampshire, Pence said he has been troubled by what he called the politicization of the FBI. He also said the Justice Department and Attorney General Merrick Garland should be more forthcoming about what led authorities to conduct the search.

But Pence, who is trying to stake out his own political path as he and Trump both consider 2024 presidential campaigns, also had a message for the GOP.

"I also want to remind my fellow Republicans, we can



Former Vice President Mike Pence gestures during the "Politics and Eggs" breakfast gathering, Wednesday, Aug. 17, 2022, in Manchester, N.H.

Associated Press

hold the attorney general accountable for the decision he made without attacking the rank-and-file law enforcement personnel at the FBI," he said at the Politics & Eggs event, a breakfast gathering at St. Anselm College for business leaders that has become a customary stop for White House hopefuls in the early-voting state.

"The Republican Party is the party of law and order," Pence continued. "Our party stands with the men and women who stand on the thin blue line at the federal and state and local level, and these attacks on the FBI must stop. Calls to defund the FBI are just as wrong as calls to defund the police."

Trump and some other Republican lawmakers have

tried to capitalize on the search by portraying it as an act of political persecution and an attack on the rule of law.

For the onetime political allies, their paths diverged on Jan. 6, 2021, when a mob of angry Trump supporters stormed the Capitol in an effort to stop Congress' formal certification of Joe Biden's presidential victory. Trump denounced his vice president, who was presiding over the Senate, for refusing to object or delay the certification — something Pence had no power to do. A fake gallows was constructed on the National Mall, and people who broke into the Capitol chanted, "Hang Mike Pence! Hang Mike Pence!" Before Wednesday, Pence had refused to say whether

he would engage with the House committee investigating the insurrection if the panel requested his testimony.

"If there was an invitation to participate, I would consider it," Pence said, adding he would first reflect "on the unique role" he was serving as vice president.

"It would be unprecedented in history for a vice president to be summoned to testify on Capitol Hill, but as I said, I don't want to prejudge," he said. "If ever any formal invitation was rendered to us, we'd give it due consideration."

A committee spokesperson declined comment on Pence's remarks.

The committee and Pence's team have had an open line of communication since Pence's former

chief of staff, Marc Short, agreed to testify in private in December 2021 after receiving a subpoena. Short was at the Capitol on Jan. 6 and accompanied Pence as the then-vice president fled the Senate chamber and hid from rioters who were calling for his hanging.

In Short's recorded testimony, aired at the committee's public hearings this summer, he described attending White House meetings before the insurrection during which Trump allies discussed ways to overturn the results of the 2020 election.

At one point, Trump had banned Short from the White House grounds because Short objected to the pressure on Pence to reject the legitimate election results. Committee members so far have not decided to seek Pence's testimony, saying that Short and former Pence lawyer Greg Jacobs have provided investigators with plenty of evidence. □

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CDC director announces shake-up, citing COVID mistakes

By **MIKE STOBBE**
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The head of the nation's top public health agency on Wednesday announced a shake-up of the organization, saying it fell short responding to COVID-19 and needs to become more nimble.

The planned changes at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — CDC leaders call it a "reset" — come amid criticism of the agency's response to COVID-19, monkeypox and other public health threats. The changes include internal staffing moves and steps to speed up data releases.

The CDC's director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, told the agency's staff about the changes on Wednesday. It's a CDC initiative, and was not directed by the White House or other administration officials, she said.

"I feel like it's my responsibility to lead this agency to a better place after a really challenging three years," Walensky told The Associated Press.

The Atlanta-based agency, with a \$12 billion budget and more than 11,000 employees, is charged with protecting Americans from disease outbreaks and oth-



A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sign stands at the entrance of their offices in Atlanta on Tuesday, April 19, 2022.

Associated Press

er public health threats. It's customary for each CDC director to do some reorganizing, but Walensky's action comes amid a wider demand for change.

The agency has long been criticized as too ponderous, focusing on collection and analysis of data but not acting quickly against new health threats. Public unhappiness with the agency grew dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic. Experts said the CDC was slow to recognize

how much virus was entering the U.S. from Europe, to recommend people wear masks, to say the virus can spread through the air, and to ramp up systematic testing for new variants.

"We saw during COVID that CDC's structures, frankly, weren't designed to take in information, digest it and disseminate it to the public at the speed necessary," said Jason Schwartz, a health policy researcher at the Yale School of Public Health.

Walensky, who became director in January 2021, has long said the agency has to move faster and communicate better, but stumbles have continued during her tenure. In April, she called for an in-depth review of the agency, which resulted in the announced changes.

"It's not lost on me that we fell short in many ways" responding to the coronavirus, Walensky said. "We had some pretty public mistakes, and so much of

this effort was to hold up the mirror ... to understand where and how we could do better."

Her reorganization proposal must be approved by the Department of Health and Human Services secretary.

CDC officials say they hope to have a full package of changes finalized, approved and underway by early next year.

Some changes still are being formulated, but steps announced Wednesday include:

—Increasing use of preprint scientific reports to get out actionable data, instead of waiting for research to go through peer review and publication by the CDC journal Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

—Restructuring the agency's communications office and further revamping CDC websites to make the agency's guidance for the public more clear and easier to find.

—Altering the length of time agency leaders are devoted to outbreak responses to a minimum of six months — an effort to address a turnover problem that at times caused knowledge gaps and affected the agency's communications. □

U.S. traffic deaths, once in decline, continue to rise in 2022



Emergency crews work the scene of a fatal crash involving a charter bus and car on the AA highway in Campbell County, Ky., Jan. 25, 2020.

Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — U.S. traffic fatalities began to climb two years ago and that deadly trend is continuing in 2022.

Roadway deaths rose 7%

during the first three months of the year to 9,560 people, the highest number for a first quarter in two decades, according to estimates by the National Highway Traf-

fic Safety Administration. Traffic deaths have risen ever since pandemic lockdowns eased in 2020 as people returned to work and started taking more road trips. People drove about 40 billion more miles in the first quarter than a year earlier, a 5.6% increase, the agency said. But the rate of traffic deaths per 100 million miles traveled also increased during the quarter from 1.25 deaths, to 1.27, according to the agency.

Before 2020, the number of fatalities had fallen for three consecutive years. The government has blamed the increase on speeding, impaired driving and other reckless behavior, and it has pledged to

fund investments in speed enforcement and to build safer roads.

"The overall numbers are still moving in the wrong direction," NHTSA Administrator Steven Cliff said in a prepared statement. "Now is the time for all states to double down on traffic safety."

The infrastructure law has money for significant investments in highway safety, Cliff said.

The agency has started running ads urging people to slow down and not to drive while impaired. On Wednesday it announced the annual national impaired driving enforcement program with local police for the weeks around the Labor Day holiday.

Nearly 43,000 people were killed on U.S. roads last year. That's the highest number in 16 years.

Traffic deaths rose 10.5% last year over 2020, the largest percentage increase since NHTSA began its fatality data collection in 1975. The agency will release final numbers for 2021 in the fall.

NHTSA's fatality estimates are usually close to the actual numbers.

Cliff, who was confirmed by the Senate to run NHTSA just three months ago, is leaving the agency next month to run the California Air Resources Board, which regulates pollution. Chief Counsel Ann Carlson will run the agency until a new administrator is nominated. □

Article on 'fat' Arab women sparks uproar over body-shaming

By ISABEL DEBRE and MAGGIE HYDE

Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — To Enas Taleb, the headline felt like a spiteful punch line.

"Why women are fatter than men in the Arab world," it read in bold, above a photograph of the Iraqi actress waving on-stage at an arts festival.

The Economist article ran through possible explanations of the obesity gap of 10 percentage points between men and women in the Middle East, then cited Iraqis who see Taleb's curves as the ideal of beauty.

"Fat," a word now considered taboo in much of Western media, was repeated six times.

The article triggered torrid criticism on social media. Twitter users blasted it as misogynistic. Local rights groups issued denunciations. Some writers were appalled by what they described as demeaning stereotypes about Arab women.

Taleb, 42, said she's suing the London-based magazine for defamation.

While analysts acknowledge an epidemic of obesity in the Arab world and its connection to poverty and gender discrimination, Taleb's case and the ensuing uproar have thrown a light on the issue of body-shaming that is deeply rooted yet rarely discussed in the region.

"If there's a student who goes to school and hears mean comments and students bullying her for being fat, how would she feel?" Taleb told The Associated Press from Baghdad. "This article is an insult not only to me but a violation of the rights of all Iraqi and Arab women."

The Economist did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

Fat-shaming is offensive enough in the United States that when two sports commentators called some female athletes overweight on air earlier this year, they



This July 2022 photo provided by Enas Taleb, shows Iraqi actress Enas Taleb posing for a picture. Associated Press

were swiftly fired.

In the Middle East, the report argued, the desirability of fleshy women may help explain why the region has experienced an explosion of obesity.

But the angry backlash over the article and Taleb's horror that her photo was used to illustrate growing waistlines of Arab women contradicts the oft-repeated belief that being heavy is widely seen as sign of affluence and fertility in the region.

The globalization of Western beauty ideals through branding, TV and social media has long given rise to unrealistic body standards that skew women's expectations of themselves and others in the Arab world, research shows.

In a forthcoming study on Egypt, Joan Costa-Font at the London School of Economics said he found that although some older women in rural areas still view rounder women as affluent, "it's not true in Egypt that being overweight is a sign of beauty. ... Western standards are more relevant."

Demand for cosmetic surgery has boomed in Lebanon. Some 75% of female Emirati students reported dissatisfaction with their bodies, and 25% are prone to eating disorders, according to a 2010 study at

Dubai's Zayed University.

And yet, many say, fat-shaming remains widespread and acceptable in the region, compared to the U.S. and Europe, where self-esteem movements have gained momentum and galvanized public discussions around inclusivity.

"Our politicians in Lebanon keep making these horrible, sexist comments about women's bodies. If they come under fire that doesn't necessarily lead to rising awareness," said Joumana Haddad, a Lebanese author and human rights activist.

Haddad noted that new forays into female empowerment have provoked "reactionary discourse and anger" from Lebanon's patriarchal society. Even cavalier public comments about weight can be deeply painful to young women who struggle with insecurity and a pathological will to alter their bodies in pursuit of beauty, she added.

"I'm a 51-year-old harsh, angry feminist and I still weigh myself every single morning," Haddad said. "You can imagine how hard it is for people who have been less privileged." Ameni Esseibi, a Tunisian-born woman who overcame social stigma to become the Arab world's first

plus-sized model, said body positivity remains taboo in the Middle East even as populations have become more overweight.

"Kuwaitis are plus-sized, Saudis are plus-sized. But people are ashamed.

They weren't taught to be confident in this judgmental society," Esseibi said.

"We always want to be skinny, to look good, to get married to the most powerful guy."

But, she said, there are signs of growing awareness. After years of ignoring vulgar comments about women's bodies, Arabs are increasingly turning to social media to vent their anger.

The Economist article's depiction of men "shutting women up at home" to keep them "Rubenesque" touched a nerve.

The Baghdad-based Heya, or "She," Foundation, which advocates for women in media, denounced the report as "bullying" and demanded the magazine apologize to Taleb.

The Malaysia-based Musawah Foundation, which promotes equality in the Muslim world, said the backlash shows that "women in the region are building a collective discourse that rejects and calls out sexist, racist, and fat-phobic acts and their colonial legacies." □

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Syria denies it is holding American journalist Austin Tice

By **ALBERT AJI and BASSEM MROUE**

Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) —

Syria denied on Wednesday it is holding U.S. journalist Austin Tice or other Americans after President Joe Biden accused the Syrian government of detaining him.

The Syrian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Damascus "denies it had kidnapped or is holding any American citizen on its territories."

"The U.S. issued last week misleading and illogical statements by the American president and secretary of state that included baseless accusations against Syria that it had kidnapped or detained American citizens including former U.S. Marine Austin Tice," the statement said.

Biden's comments last week came in a statement released by the White House to mark the 10th anniversary of Tice's abduction, which took place when he was in Syria covering its lengthy conflict. Biden's remarks were the clearest indication so far that the U.S. is certain Tice is being held by the government of President Bashar



Marc and Debra Tice, the parents of Austin Tice, who is missing in Syria, speak during a press conference, at the Press Club, in Beirut, Lebanon, Dec. 4, 2018.

Associated Press

Assad.

"We know with certainty that he has been held by the Government of Syria," Biden said in his statement last week. "We have repeatedly asked the government of Syria to work with us so that we can bring Austin home."

State Department Spokesman Ned Price told reporters on Tuesday that the U.S. government has pushed

Syria to return every American. On Tice's case specifically, he said, the Biden administration has "engaged extensively and that includes directly — with Syrian officials and through third parties."

"Syria has never acknowledged holding him," Price said of Tice, adding that "we are not going to be deterred in our efforts. We are going to pursue every

avenue for securing Austin's safe return."

The Syrian Foreign Ministry denied in its statement having any secret contacts with U.S. officials on the missing Americans, adding that "any official dialogue with the American government will only be public based on the respect of Syria's sovereignty."

In May, top Lebanese security official Maj. Gen. Ab-

bas Ibrahim met with U.S. officials in Washington as part of mediation efforts between the U.S. and Syria for Tice's release. Ibrahim, the chief of Lebanon's General Security Directorate, has mediated complicated hostage releases in the past.

In May, Biden met Tice's parents and reiterated his commitment to working toward "Austin's long overdue return to his family."

In the final months of the Trump administration, two U.S. officials — including the government's top hostage negotiator, Roger Carstens, a former Army Special Forces officer made a secret visit to Damascus to seek information on Tice and other Americans who have disappeared in Syria. It was the highest-level talks in years between the U.S. and Assad's government, though Syrian officials offered no meaningful information on Tice.

Tice went missing shortly after his 31st birthday on Aug. 14, 2012 at a checkpoint in a contested area west of the capital of Damascus. A video released a month later showed him blindfolded and held by armed men, saying, "Oh, Jesus." □

El Salvador extends state of exception; 50,000 arrested



People arrested by police for having alleged links to gangs wait in zip tie handcuffs in the back of a truck to be transferred to a prison at the Police Delegation of San Bartolo in Soyapango, El Salvador, Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2022.

Associated Press

By **MARCOS ALEMÁN**

Associated Press

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador

(AP) — With 50,000 people locked up since late March for alleged gang ties, El Salvador's congress has

approved another month-long extension of the state of exception that suspends some fundamental rights in the name of combatting the country's powerful gangs. Polling has shown

the measure to be widely popular despite criticism from civil rights organizations within and outside El Salvador. Those groups and relatives of the detained say people have been arrested without evidence or due process and jailed for months already as they await trial.

Before the congressional vote late Tuesday, a few dozen protesters gathered outside the Legislative Assembly calling for an end to the state of exception.

President Nayib Bukele requested extraordinary powers after gangs were blamed for 62 killings on March 26. Under the state of exception, the right of association, the right to be informed of the reason for an arrest and access to a lawyer are suspended. The

government also can intervene in the calls and mail of anyone they consider a suspect. The time someone can be held without charges is extended from three days to 15 days.

The current period was set to expire Aug. 20.

Those arrested typically make initial appearances en masse before a judge where prosecutors accuse them belonging to or associating with gangs. Evidence is usually not presented. Judges have been almost automatic in ordering them held for six months pending trial, giving prosecutors time to try to build cases.

Bukele and his cabinet say the measures are finally allowing the country to deal with its "terrorists." The president has shifted from

tweeting the number of arrests each day to heralding the days with no murders. The government is building a massive new prison.

The gangs, which have been estimated to count some 70,000 members in their ranks, have long terrorized El Salvador. They controlled swaths of territory and extorted and killed with impunity.

"We have strongly impacted the terrorist structures," said Security Minister Gustavo Villatoro in presenting the extension request to lawmakers Wednesday. "We have witnessed how Salvadorans were able to enjoy the safest vacations in history," referring to recent national holidays.

The proposal received the support of 66 of the body's 84 lawmakers. □

Minister plenipotentiary attended the commemoration of 15 August 1945

Minister Plenipotentiary of Aruba in the Netherlands, mr. Ady Thijsen attended the national commemoration of 15 August 1945. On this date, the Second World War officially ended for the kingdom of the Netherlands.

At the same time, on this date all victims of the war in Asia against Japan, and

the occupation of Japan of the Dutch East Indies are remembered.

Prime minister of the Netherlands, Mark Rutte, together with State Secretary for Public Health, General Wellbeing and Sport, Maarten van Ooijen, laid a wreath in the name of the Kingdom Council of Ministers.



This year's commemoration was held for the first time at 7pm, and after two years

of coronavirus pandemic it could welcome a large public who were there to presence at the Indisch

Monument at The Hague.

Photographer Marco de Swart.

Virtual meeting between Kingdom's premiers and Secretary of State

They discussed the alternative COHO law, on which Aruba is working



ORANJESTAD – This week, a virtual meeting took place between the Dutch Secretary of State for Kingdom Affairs, Alexandra van Huffelen, together with the prime minister of Curaçao, Mr. Gilmar 'Pik' Pisas; prime minister of Sint Maarten, Mrs. Silveria Jacobs; and prime minister of Aruba, Evelyn Wever-Croes. During this meeting, various topics were discussed, however the most important was an update on the current state of the COHO laws.

According to a press release from the government of Aruba, these sorts of meetings take place regularly to discuss common topics.

Last June, during a visit of Secretary of State Van Huffelen to Aruba, where

she met with the prime ministers of Curaçao and Sint Maarten, the countries indicated to the Secretary of State that they do not have enough support in Parliament for a kingdom law for COHO. COHO is the Caribbean Organ for Reform and Development, which was agreed by all three countries as a condition to receive financial support from the Netherlands during the Covid-19 pandemic.

At that time, it was agreed that Aruba would work on an alternative for COHO. During the virtual meeting that took place this week, deliberations were held on how far the preparations for this alternative law are, and how the progress is going.

Prime minister Wever-Croes indicated that she expects that by the end of this current month there will be a concept on which the countries can deliberate. Next month, another meeting will take place between Secretary of State Van Huffelen, prime minister Pisas, prime minister Jacobs,

and prime minister Wever-Croes, in order to discuss this alternative.

It is a fact, according to the press release, that Aruba, Curaçao and Sint Maarten have indicated that they do not have enough support in Parliament for a consensus kingdom law for COHO, so they are working on an alternative, Wever-Croes indicated.

She added that these sorts of meetings are necessary in order to keep in contact with each other and to discuss common themes. Other themes that were discussed during the meeting included the decisions made in the Kingdom Council of Ministers and the landspakket – the package of conditions that each country needs to im-

plement, which was also agreed as a condition in order to receive financial support from the Netherlands during the Covid-19 pandemic. For Aruba, the topic of an advice to receive a binding instruction from the Netherlands regarding the budget is a current theme, but this was not discussed in a group meeting like this one with the other prime ministers.

To conclude, Wever-Croes said that this week she will discuss the binding instruction with Secretary of State Van Huffelen, because it is a topic regarding Aruba. She says that her cabinet is working with a lot of effort to avoid the binding instruction so that Aruba can continue on the path to recovery.



Bowls Noodle Bar invites you to a Happy Hour with a unique flavor



Bowls Noodle Bar recently opened at their new location at The Village, near the High Rise Hotels. To celebrate, they are launching their new Happy Hour from 9pm to 11pm every day.



Before the pandemic, Bowls Noodle Bar opened at the Hyatt by the airport, and was in the process of opening a second location at The Village when the pandemic hit. Due to the consequences of the pandemic, they decided to close the restaurant by the airport and open their new location at The Village. Their new location has been open for about six months to great results.

At The Village, night time is the best time. This is why they are now offering a daily Happy Hour, from 9pm to 11pm. It includes \$3 beer and \$5 cocktails. Their cocktails are made in-house with a unique fusion of Asian flavors, for example, the popular purple Ube Mojito, with the flavor of traditional Ube, a Japanese dessert; the Blue Samurai with ginger flavor; and the refreshing Fruity Blossoms, with a flavor encompassing the Sakura, the famous Japanese Cherry Blossoms. You can try all these for only \$5 each during Happy Hour.

Fusion is at the core of the unique flavors of Bowls Noodle Bar, and this is expressed beautifully in their traditional Japanese soups. They are the only restaurant in Aruba that has most of the noodles traditionally used, Udon, Ramen, and Rice noodles. Ramen noodles, served fresh, are a surprising flavor for those who are used to dried ramen noodles. They also have Jasmine rice for the rice bowls.

Their authentic soups are the highlight and star. Chef Warren explains that there are four main components to the soup: the broth, the noodles, tare, and the oil, and these are very important for the traditional Japanese soups. At Bowls Noodle Bar, they have a wide variety of flavors to cater to every taste, like the famous Pork Chashu. It comes with fresh ramen noodles, and it's the pride of Bowls Noodle Bar. Chef Warren says that the broth for this soup takes two to three days to make, and is made in-house, with fresh and delicious ingredients. They also cater to vegetarians and vegans, with various options on the menu like tofu mushroom soup, vegetable gyoza, wonton, and fresh kimchi

fermented at the restaurant.

The wok concept also allows you to create your own unique dish, choosing your base, protein, vegetables and sauce.

Origin

The founders of Bowls Noodle Bar, Dexter Moreno and his partner Lai, opened their first location on Curaçao. They traveled to Japan to study Japanese Cuisine, and they fell in love with Japanese soup. Lai's parents are Chinese, and this is the start of the Asian-fusion flavors that are both surprising and delectable, combining Japanese, Chinese and even some Korean cuisine. Chef Warren was trained in these traditional flavors by the founders themselves.

They came to Aruba where Dexter approached some ex-colleagues in the industry to open a location on the island, and with a local team, opened Bowls Noodle Bar Aruba with a more extensive menu.

Opening hours are Monday to Thursday 5pm – 11:30pm; Friday and Saturday 5pm – 12pm; and Sunday 5pm – 11:30pm. Come visit for great atmosphere, delicious flavors, and a Happy Hour to remember! ☐





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The Aruba Police Force is celebrating its 36 anniversary



Oranjestad - 36 years ago in 1986, Aruba got its Status Aparte and founded the Aruba Police Force.

The Police Force counted merely 200 police officers from all ranks, and the majority were from the former Netherlands Antilles. Chief of Police Mr. Ronald Peterson had the task of setup the Aruba Police Corps for Aruba in a different constellation of the Dutch Kingdom.

The Police Force had a few female officers from the very beginning. These were Mrs. Marlen de Cuba-Giel and Mrs. Gerda Williams. The new Police Force had its headquarters built in Oranjestad, where the Wind Creek Renaissance Mari-

na Hotel is situated, and one in San Nicolas. These were the two official police stations after 1986. Since then, the Police Force of Aruba started to improve and grow, underwent changes, and the organization became larger.

With hard work and determination, the Police Force of Aruba was founded, crawled, and matured into the current Police Force. In 2022 the Police Force had about 600 employees, mostly police officers and administrative personnel who serve and protect the Aruban community. Now the Police Force has men and women in uniform stationed in 4 precincts; Oranjestad, Noord, San Nicolas, and Santa Cruz.



Over the past years, the Police Force had different special units, Motorized Unit, Canine Unit, Arrest Team, Riot Team, Diving Unit, Coast Surveillance, Helicopter Unit, Surveillance, Team Narcotics Houses, Organized Crimes Unit, and the Detective Department.

Over time, the Aruba Police Force has created a well-respected reputation by international justice entities such as the Interpol, DEA, FBI, RCMP, Force Protection Agency, ACCP and the IACP. The Police Force is also closely working with several Police Departments in the Netherlands like Police Corps Rotterdam, Police Force Rijmond, KLDP (National Police Force), RST

(Criminal Investigation Team), Police Force Curacao, Police Force Dutch Caribbean, and many others.

The Aruban community can be very proud of having its Police Force celebrating its 36th anniversary. These are 36 years of growth, dedication, and determination. Congratulations to all current and past members of the Police Force. Thank you for your commitment and passion for protecting and serving the community.

The community is grateful to the families of these police officers as well for their understanding, patience, and support for each Police officer. □

History of fishing in Aruba

ORANJESTAD — Fishing has been a family tradition for ages in Aruba. Our ancestors used to fish for a living. Even though nowadays you don't see them often we still have some passionate fishermen on the island that go out every day in search for fish to feed their families and serve our local market. One of these fishermen is Gregory Wernet.

The so-called Continental Bank between Aruba and the opposite coast reaches a depth of about 650 feet. The sea is very rich in fish here. Since the time of the indigenous native people fish and other sea creatures such as turtles, octopus squids, conch and many type of crustaceans have formed a means of subsistence for the native Aruban inhabitants. Especially along the west coast of the island where the fishing grounds are settlements of fishermen. Until the arrival of the oil -industry Aruban fishermen could supply Aruba's wants.

As a source of income, however, fishing did not amount too much. In the beginning of the 1900's approximately 160 people earn their living in this branch of this indus-



try. Rancho, which stands for a shed, nowadays east Oranjestad, was the head quarter and remains the fishermen's settlement. Savaneta, Noord, Santa Cruz all had their fishermen's villages. At a rough estimate there were about a hundred small fishing boats during that time.

The Arubans were mainly engaged in coastal fishing, using rowing-boats or small sailing-boats, and lines or dragnets and canisters in shallow water. When fish-

ing with deep-sea lines just over the bottom of the sea the boat is kept in place by means of a piece of rock serving as an anchor. The two most important species of fish by far caught in this manner are the pargo or red snappers and a variety of groupers like the mero, jeanpao and the wowo di boyo.

Cruising off the coast the Aruban fisherman patiently waits for a fish willing to snap at the bait on the drag-line, in nets and traps. Veritable giants are sometimes caught. Barracudas weigh from 9 to 44 pounds and measure from 3 to almost 7 feet. The king-fish has a weight from 22 to 44 pounds; the moclat may tip the scales at 155, whilst garfish, having a length of nine feet, weigh over 132 pounds.

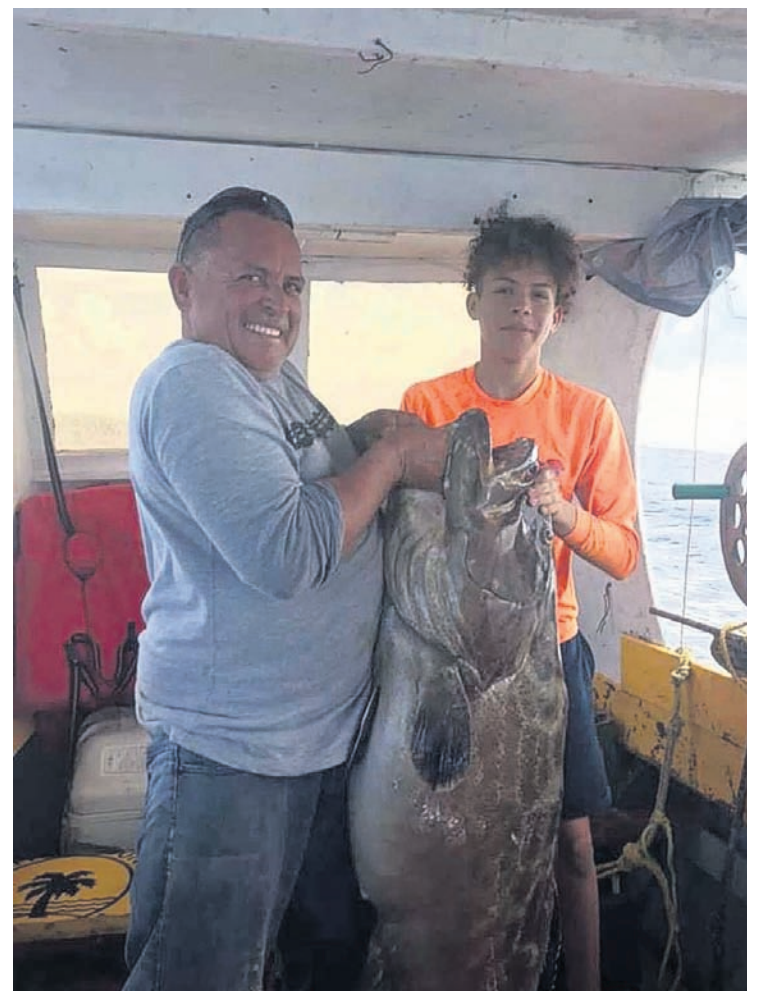
Most fish caught is used for their own consumption, to feed their families and some are being sold in the market to local restaurants.

Fisherman Gregory Wernet
Gregory Wernet is a well-known fisherman from Santa Cruz. His father taught him fishing when he was a small child. Gregory has two sons, Jordan and Jordanny, which he taught fishing too, when they were only 3 years old and he takes them fishing with him. Fishing has been a family tradition for quite a long

day before they prepare all their fishing tools such as the Lines, lures, spears, and load their boat with fishing reels, batteries, fill the gasoline tank, lights and some food and beverages. For bait he uses sardines, squid and the small fish known in Aruba as piskechi. They have two boats they use for fishing. 'Virgen del Valle' which is parked at the pier by the Seaport and 'Padrot' which they have at home.

The fish they catch they take home to their families and they also sell it to their clients. Gregory is proud to be a fisherman. It is a honest and humble job but with it he is able to feed his family even during hard times. It is a very dangerous job and you have to spend many hours on the sea, waiting patiently and risking your life while fighting a big fish and big waves but the adrenaline it brings with it but also just sitting there listening to the sound of the waves and enjoying the marvelous view that nature has to offer is all worth it. □

Source: Etnia Nativa



Metabolic Foundation presented the Surfside Science project

ORANJESTAD – Tuesday morning, Metabolic Foundation announced its Surfside Science project, which will focus on methods for measuring the quality of air and sea water, changes in the coast landscape and vegetation in the bottom of the ocean. During a press conference, Christie Mettes, project coordinator, elaborated on the project and its goals.

Mettes explained that Surfside Science is a project that received financing from Resembid, which is a fund of the European Union managed by Expertise France, the collaboration agency for French development that manages projects in the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT), which include Aruba and 11 other islands in the Caribbean.

The Surfside Science project will have duration of one year, and during that year, Metabolic Foundation will test different methods that can be used to automate data collection on Aruba's coasts, both on land and in the ocean itself, close to the coast. Mettes indicated that these methods are more affordable than traditional method, and the foundation tries to make them more replicable in order that they can also be used by people who are not scientists themselves.

To guarantee that the methods are trustworthy, throughout the year the foundation will be working together with marine ecologist and environmental engineer Tatiana Becker, who will compare the results that Metabolic Foundation measures with the results that she will measure using standard methods generally used in science. With this, the foundation hopes to prove that their methods can be applied on more beaches around Aruba.

Mettes explained that the foundation is in close contact with the Department of Nature and Environment



(DNM), and with the University of Aruba, and in the development of this project, the project was confirmed by DNM and Deaci (Department of Economic Affairs, Commerce and Industry) before it was sent to the European Union.

Mettes also said that what worries the Metabolic Foundation is that around the world, and also in the Caribbean, what is happening in the coasts can be observed, particularly with climate change, and regrettably in Aruba a lot of the data which could show these changes is not there. She commented that right now the reason given for this lack of data is that there is no money to finance the data collection, or sometimes not enough capacity to constantly collect the data.

With this in mind, Metabolic Foundation is trying to come up with solutions that automate the collection of data necessary to observe the changes that are going on. When Aruba wants to implement a solution, it is possible to see if the solution is working or not.

"A lot of data collection at this moment is not automated and it's not constant. We took note of a report by Carmabi which for sure was very valuable for Aruba, but it is a snapshot

and they didn't continue collecting constantly. What we want to contribute with is a system that when for example you go online to find information, this information can be available", Mettes said.

She indicated that a lot of this data is data that Aruba needs to present for the Sustainable Development Goals, thus is data that internationally can be requested and for which there is already a purpose and policy. Metabolic Foundation will not work on the policy.

Mettes added that in general there are changes in the Caribbean, but there is still a lot of information lacking, on other islands as well,

and a lot of them don't have a monitoring system either.

Regarding the goal of the Surfside Science projects, Mettes commented that with the study they can prove who is responsible for what. What they can say is that once they have the data they can see if there are changes taking place, or if the quality is bad. A lot of the points measured by the foundation are the basic lines, the simplest things. They see the water temperature, acidity (pH) of the water, water conductivity, salinity and the amount of oxygen that exists in the water.

The problems of pollution or waste are outside of

the scope of what they're measuring, but are related to this. When these points begin to go down, at that point it can be investigated why they are showing a negative direction.

"Right now, the goal of this study is to see if these methods can be used. We are using the area of Surfside as a pilot area, and if the investigation shows that the methods work, then we hope to expand the project to monitor all coasts of Aruba", Mettes added.

The community can also contribute with the Surfside Science project. Mettes commented that they want to make the project very open, and there will be various information sessions and also aspects in which the public can collaborate, for example, by taking pictures underwater.

Finally, in the name of Metabolic Foundation, Mettes extended an invitation to the people of Aruba to follow them on Instagram and be pending for updates on the project.

"We will try to share information every month on the progress of the project, how it's going and what kind of data we collected already, if it was validated or not. Any person who wants to participate or has feedback, we are very open to receiving the feedback", she said.



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 43 Big ringer

1 Bugler's evening call

5 Plot

11 Trumpeter

Al

12 Blackout thief

13 Smell

14 White Rabbit's cry

15 Turned over a new leaf

17 Eden name

18 Check marks

22 English county

24 Peach center

25 —

Angelos

26 Veto

27 Prentious people

30 Grant's bill

32 Snowy wader

33 Top pitcher

34 Theater seat features

38 Chin cover

41 Tibet setting

42 Confuses

DOWN

1 Hammer wielder

2 Staff member

3 College figure

4 Tried hard

5 Slender

6 Astro-nomical sightings

7 "Wait a sec!"

8 Greek vowel

9 Convened

10 Before, to bards

16 Sheepdog in "Babe"

19 Priest, at times

20 Polo shirt, e.g.

21 Hot

22 Different

23 Musical number

28 John or Paul

29 Manhole setting

30 Way off

31 Pleis-tocene period

35 Clutter

36 Turner of song

37 Yields to gravity

38 Chatter

39 Dedicated verse

40 Spots

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Yesterday's answer

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38	39	40						41		
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44								45		

8-18

A X Y D L B A A X R
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

8-18

CRYPTOQUOTE

ITKKQW LUI U PCUBJW CAXQ

HJ JELQW. UCGUMI PWQIL UHF

IAKKQWQF AH ITHILAHQ.

— JYWUL GAHPWQM

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: BE MESSY AND COMPLICATED AND AFRAID AND SHOW UP ANYWAYS. — GLENNON DOYLE MELTON

Tips to take the sting out of 50% higher car rental prices



Plexiglass stands between patrons and staff at the car rental counter at Love Field airport Friday, May 28, 2021, in Dallas.

Associated Press

By SALLY FRENCH of Nerd-Wallet

When making your travel budget, don't assume that lodging and airfare will be your biggest expense. Now, more than ever, rental cars are shaping up to be one of the biggest and stubbornly high aspects of people's vacation budgets.

While airfare and lodging prices are certainly near all-time highs, rental cars are among the biggest price increases of all travel expenses. When comparing prices for July 2022 versus July 2019 (the last normal summer pre-pandemic), hotel prices are up 7%, according to the latest set of Consumer Price Index data released in August 2022. Airfares are up 16%. But rental cars are up a whopping 48%.

WHEN DID RENTAL CAR PRICES GET SO HIGH?

Like most travel costs, rental car prices sharply dropped in April and May 2020 as people began calling off vacations to stay at home. But things began to turn around at the beginning of 2021 when prices began increasing every month, building up to a record high set in July 2021.

Road trips were especially hot that summer (thus high demand), but other factors including a global semiconductor shortage and tourism industry labor shortages contributed to low supply. In fact, leisure and hospitality sector employment remains 7.8% below pre-pandemic levels, ac-

cording to an analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data from the U.S. Travel Association.

Prices have slightly dipped from the July 2021 record, but they are still far above pre-pandemic pricing.

HOW TO FIND AFFORDABLE RENTAL CARS

NerdWallet conducted an analysis of 360 rental car reservations to better understand the cheapest ways to rent. Some of the findings may help you save on your next rental car.

Among the rental car companies in the analysis, Enterprise is usually the cheapest, while National is most expensive. The analysis also found that last-minute rentals are typically cheaper than those booked months in advance. And you'll almost always save by booking at an off-site rental car location versus at the airport. That knowledge can help you better understand the cheapest places to book, but sometimes booking from a specific location or company might be non-negotiable with the nature of your trip. These other tricks can still help you save:

USE TRAVEL CREDIT CARDS: Some travel credit cards offer rental car insurance as part of their benefits, though it may exclude certain types of expensive cars or rentals in some countries. When it is applicable though, it can save you money on the extra insurance you might have otherwise signed up for at the counter.

JOIN RENTAL CAR LOYALTY

PROGRAMS: Benefits vary based on your level of elite status, though some levels can include free upgrades and waived fees.

You might even get automatic status through a credit card. Yet even the entry-level, free-to-join tiers can include perks like priority lines.

RESERVE NOW AND PAY AT THE COUNTER:

Many rental car companies give you the option to pay at the counter. Paying upon pickup has two major benefits versus paying upfront: First, should you need to cancel your trip, you remove the headache of trying to get a refund since you won't have put down any money anyway. Second, if rates drop, you can always cancel and rebook at a lower rate.

HOW TO SAVE MONEY ON ROAD TRIPS

Throw in high gas prices, and road trips might be one of the most expensive ways to travel these days. Here are some ways to cut back on costs.

USE APPS TO FIND CHEAP GAS:

Apps like GasBuddy track local gas prices and can help you find the cheapest gas stations along your route.

CONSIDER AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE:

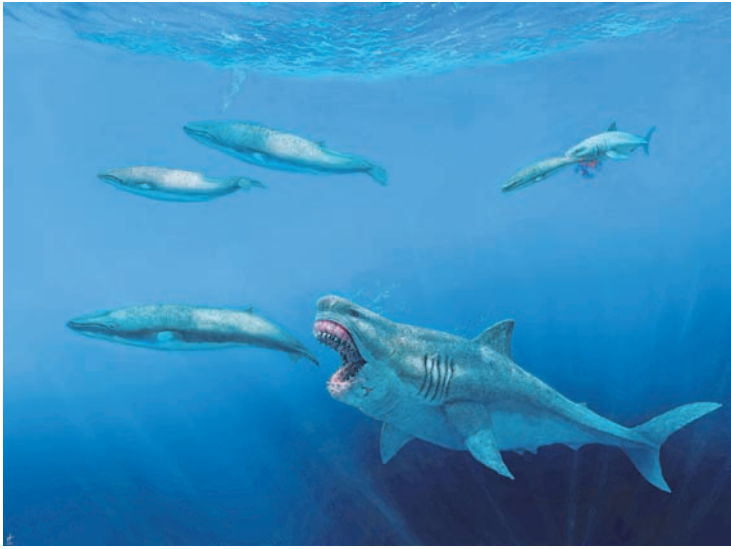
With an electric car, you'll avoid paying for gas entirely. While you may still have to pay to charge it, some hotels offer free electric vehicle charging as a guest benefit.

PLAN A BUDGET-FRIENDLY ROUTE:

If you're open-minded to location, consider driving through states with lower gas prices. During the last week of July, the three states with the lowest gas prices were Georgia, South Carolina and Texas, according to AAA data.

WHY TRIP PLANNING SHOULD START WITH RENTAL CAR PRICES

Before you get too caught up in the excitement of a road trip, make sure you can afford it. With prices so much higher than they were two years ago, you don't want to get caught off guard. □



This illustration provided by J. J. Giraldo depicts a 16-meter (52-foot) Otodus megalodon shark predating on an 8-meter (26-foot) Balaenoptera whale in the Pliocene epoch, between 5.4 to 2.4 million years ago. At background right, a 4-meter (13-foot) Carcharodon shark seizes a 2.5-meter (8-foot) juvenile of the whale pod.

Associated Press

Giant sharks once roamed the seas, feasting on huge meals

By MADDIE BURAKOFF
AP Science Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — Today's sharks have nothing on their ancient cousins. A giant shark that roamed the oceans millions of years ago could have devoured a creature the size of a killer whale in just five bites, new research suggests. For their study published Wednesday, researchers used fossil evidence to

create a 3D model of the megalodon one of the biggest predatory fish of all time and find clues about its life.

At around 50 feet (16 meters) from nose to tail, the megalodon was bigger than a school bus, according to the study in the journal Science Advances. That's about two to three times the size of today's great white shark. The megalodon's gaping jaw allowed it to feed on other big creatures.

Once it filled its massive stomach, it could roam the oceans for months at a time, the researchers suggest. □

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Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

Assistant Director

Xiomara Arends

Editors

Pilar Flores
Richard Brooks

Sales

Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Columnists

Anthony Croes

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800

E: news@arubatoday.com

W: www.arubatoday.com

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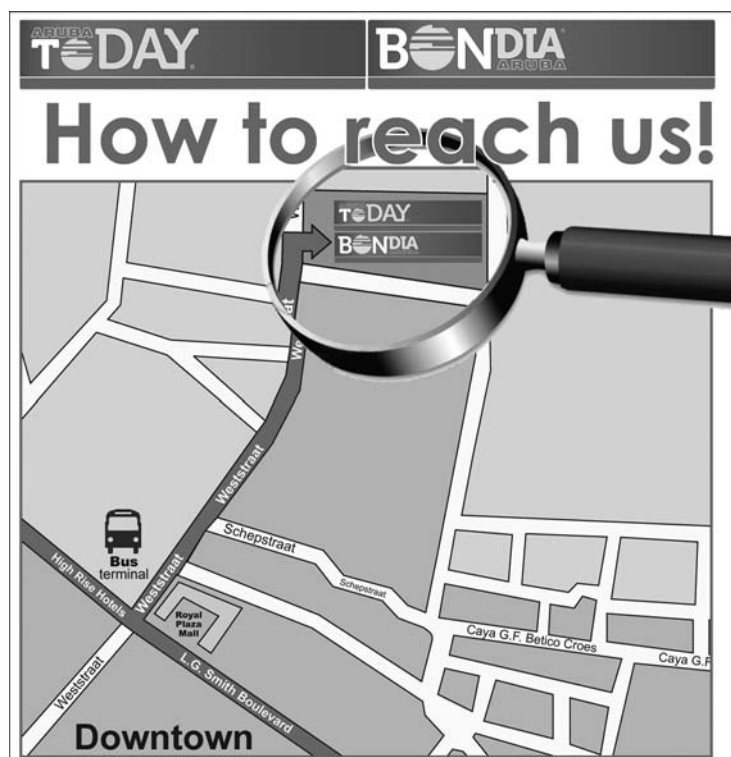
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Scientists warn of dire effects as Mediterranean heats up

By CIARÁN GILES and ILAN BEN ZION

Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — While vacationers might enjoy the Mediterranean Sea's summer warmth, climate scientists are warning of dire consequences for its marine life as it burns up in a series of severe heat waves.

From Barcelona to Tel Aviv, scientists say they are witnessing exceptional temperature hikes ranging from 3 degrees Celsius (5.4 Fahrenheit) to 5 degrees Celsius (9 Fahrenheit) above the norm for this time of year. Water temperatures have regularly exceeded 30 C (86 F) on some days.

Extreme heat in Europe and other countries around the Mediterranean has grabbed headlines this summer, but the rising sea temperature is largely out of sight and out of mind.

Marine heat waves are caused by ocean currents building up areas of warm water. Weather systems and heat in the atmosphere can also pile on degrees to the water's temperature. And just like their on-land counterparts, marine heat waves are longer, more frequent and more intense because of human-induced climate change. The situation is "very worrying," says Joaquim Garrabou, a researcher at the Institute of Marine Sciences in Barcelona. "We are pushing the system too far. We have to take action on the climate issues as soon as possible."

Garrabou is part of a team that recently published the report on heat waves in the Mediterranean Sea between 2015 and 2019. The report says these phenomena have led to "massive mortality" of marine species.

About 50 species, including corals, sponges and sea-



People cool off on Puerto de Sagunto beach, east Spain on Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2022.

Associated Press

weed, were affected along thousands of kilometers of Mediterranean coasts, according to the study, which was published in the Global Change Biology journal.

The situation in the eastern Mediterranean basin is particularly dire.

The waters off Israel, Cyprus, Lebanon and Syria are "the hottest hot spot in the Mediterranean, for sure," said Gil Rilov, a marine biologist at Israel's Oceanographic and Limnological Research institute, and one of the paper's co-authors. Average sea temperatures in the summer are now consistently over 31 C (88 F).

These warming seas are driving many native species to the brink, "because every summer their optimum temperature is being exceeded," he said.

What he and his colleagues are witnessing in terms of biodiversity loss is what is

projected to happen further west in the Mediterranean toward Greece, Italy and Spain in the coming years.

Garrabou points out that seas have been serving the planet by absorbing 90% of the earth's excess heat and 30% of carbon dioxide emitted into the atmosphere by coal, oil and gas production. This carbon-sink effect shields the planet from even harsher climate effects.

This was possible because oceans and seas were in a healthy condition, Garrabou said.

"But now we have driven the ocean to an unhealthy and dysfunctional state," he said.

While the earth's greenhouse gas emissions will have to be drastically reduced if sea warming is to be curtailed, ocean scientists are specifically looking

for authorities to guarantee that 30% of sea areas are protected from human activities such as fishing, which would give species a chance to recover and thrive.

About 8% of the Mediterranean Sea area is currently protected.

Garrabou and Rilov said that policymakers are largely unaware of the warming Mediterranean and its impact.

"It's our job as scientists to bring this to their attention so they can think about it," Rilov said.

Heat waves occur when especially hot weather continues over a set number of days, with no rain or little wind. Land heat waves help cause marine heat waves and the two tend to feed each other in a vicious, warming circle.

Land heat waves have become commonplace in many countries around the Mediterranean, with dramatic side effects like wildfires, droughts, crop losses and excruciatingly high temperatures.

But marine heat waves could also have serious consequences for the countries bordering the

Mediterranean and the more than 500 million people who live there if it's not dealt with soon, scientists say. Fish stocks will be depleted and tourism will be adversely affected, as destructive storms could become more common on land.

Despite representing less than 1% of the global ocean surface area, the Mediterranean is one of the main reservoirs of marine biodiversity, containing between 4% and 18% of the world's known marine species.

Some of the most affected species are key to maintaining the functioning and diversity of the sea's habitats. Species like the *Posidonia oceanica* seagrass meadows, which can absorb vast amounts of carbon dioxide and shelters marine life, or coral reefs, which are also home to wildlife, would be at risk.

Garrabou says the mortality impacts on species were observed between the surface and 45 meters (around 150 feet) deep, where the recorded marine heat waves were exceptional. Heat waves affected more than 90% of the Mediterranean Sea's surface.

According to the most recent scientific papers, the sea surface temperature in the Mediterranean has increased by 0.4 C (0.72 F) each decade between 1982 and 2018.

On a yearly basis, it has been rising by some 0.05 C (0.09 F) over the past decade without any sign of letting up.

Even fractions of degrees can have disastrous effects on ocean health, experts say.

The affected areas have also grown since the 1980s and now covers most of the Mediterranean, the study suggests.

"The question is not about the survival of nature, because biodiversity will find way to survive on the planet," Garrabou said.

"The question is if we keep going in this direction maybe our society, humans, will not have a place to live." □



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NBA schedule has less miles, and LeBron chasing more history

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

By mid-January, LeBron James could be the NBA's scoring king.

The NBA schedule was released Wednesday, all 1,230 games that are set between Oct. 18 and April 9 taking place in four countries with Mexico and France playing host to regular-season contests along with the U.S. and Canada. There are the usual highlights — Stephen Curry and Golden State will raise another title banner on opening night, as is the NBA's customary perk for champions; a five-game slate of games on Christmas yet again; the traditional games in Atlanta and Memphis as part of the leaguewide commemoration of the life of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This year brought a twist, with Election Day now a newly created off day in the NBA. And now that the list of games is out, the numbers show that James could catch Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in the final two weeks of January — assuming James doesn't have to miss games and scores at his usual pace. James enters this season No. 2 on the all-time list, 1,325 points behind Abdul-Jabbar.

"We have obviously a very large ecosystem of league



Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (6) controls the ball during an NBA basketball game against the New Orleans Pelicans in Los Angeles, Friday, April 1, 2022.

Associated Press

office staff, team staff, players, arena staff that are truly driving to this process," said Evan Wasch, who, along with Gene Li and Tom Carelli, is on the NBA team of executives who build the schedule. "So, we are just one small piece." Wasch, Li and Carelli spent weeks putting a 1,230-piece jigsaw puzzle together, mindful of things like team wishes to have games on certain dates, total miles traveled, even carbon footprint.

The big headline from their work: Teams will travel a bit

less, about 5% fewer miles in the air on average over last season.

The NBA made that happen by adding to the instances of teams having no travel between road games, something that'll happen 88 times this season — up 66% from last season. There are 55 instances of teams playing consecutive road games against the same opponent, and 33 instances of teams playing two games in a row against the two teams from Los Angeles or New York.

Add it all up, and NBA

teams will combine to fly about 50,000 fewer miles this season. "There's a player health component, and there's also a sustainability component there," Wasch said. "That's a 5% decrease from where we've been. We'll take it."

Among the countless storylines entering the season is James, and his pursuit of more NBA history.

If he continues scoring at his typical pace — 27 points per game for his career, 30 points per game last season for the Los Angeles Lakers — he would need be-

tween 44 and 49 games to pass Abdul-Jabbar.

Games 44 through 49 for the Lakers fall in the second half of January. They happen to be at home for most of that stretch, a coincidence since it precedes the annual spot in the calendar where the Lakers and Los Angeles Clippers need to vacate their home arena while it gets ready to play host to the Grammy Awards.

Other revelations from the schedule:

BACK-TO-BACKS

Minimizing the instances of having games on back-to-back days is still a point of emphasis for the NBA, and the average number of them dipped another 1.5% this season — the average going from 13.5 per team last season to 13.3 per team this season.

Since 2014, the average is down 31.1%. Teams faced an average of 19.3 of them per season then.

No team has fewer than 12 back-to-backs this season. No team has more than 15.

ATTENDANCE RECORD
The San Antonio Spurs' magic number on Jan. 13 — 62,047.

If the Spurs' game against Golden State that night draws at least that many fans, it'll set an NBA regular-season record. □

Venus Williams back in U.S. Open after being given wild card

By **BRIAN MAHONEY**
AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Venus Williams will be back in the U.S. Open this year after being given a wild card on Wednesday into what could be younger sister Serena's final tournament. Venus Williams won back-to-back U.S. Opens in 2000 and 2001, and this year marks 25 years since she reached the 1997 final in Flushing Meadows as a 17-year-old in her first full season on tour.

Now 42, Williams did not play in the U.S. Open last year because of injury, but the seven-time Grand Slam singles champion recently returned to tour after missing nearly a year.

Serena Williams, 40, recently said she is preparing to leave tennis, though she did not specify it would come after the U.S. Open, which begins Aug. 29.

Dominic Thiem, the 2020 U.S. Open men's champion who has since dealt with injuries and fallen to No. 228 in the world ranking, also was granted a wild card by the U.S. Tennis Association. The USTA also gave a wild card to Sofia Kenin, the 2020 Australian Open champion who didn't compete in New York last year because of injury, along with fellow Americans CoCo Vandeweghe, Elizabeth Mandlik, Peyton Stearns and Eleana Yu.

Harmony Tan of France

— who beat Serena Williams during a run to the fourth round at Wimbledon — and Australian Jaimee Fourlis also received wild cards.

Mandlik, the daughter of past U.S. Open champion Hana Mandlikova, earned hers by winning the U.S. Open wild-card challenge. On the men's side, wild cards went to Americans Sam Querrey, Emilio Nava, JJ Wolf, Ben Shelton and Learner Tien, along with Ugo Humbert of France and Australian Rinky Hijikata.

Also Wednesday, 2016 U.S. Open semifinalist Gael Monfils withdrew because of an injury to his right foot sustained last week dur-



Venus Williams returns a ball from Jil Teichmann, of Switzerland, during women's tennis action at the National Bank Open tennis tournament in Toronto, early Tuesday, Aug. 9, 2022.

Associated Press

ing his match against Jack Draper in Montreal. Monfils, who missed time earlier this season after a procedure on his right heel, an-

nounced he needed further treatment for the injury. Taro Daniel of Japan moved into the main draw. □

Panthers' Rhule remains in no hurry to announce starting QB

By **KYLE HIGHTOWER**
AP Sports Writer
FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP)

— Carolina Panthers coach Matt Rhule has been adamant for weeks that he wouldn't rush to announce a winner in the ongoing quarterback competition between Sam Darnold and Baker Mayfield.

That hasn't changed, even with his team just days from taking the field for their second exhibition game, a point Rhule had previously indicated he wanted to have the situation settled. Rhule said Wednesday that the when, isn't as important as being satisfied that he's gathered all the information he needs.

"I think the thing I've said all along is that we wanted to at least get to this point



Carolina Panthers quarterback Baker Mayfield prepares to hand off the ball during an NFL football joint practice with the New England Patriots, Tuesday, Aug. 16, 2022, in Foxborough, Mass. Associated Press

where when we know, we know," Rhule said after the Panthers second joint practice with New England.

"So, it could be at any point. It could be two more weeks from now. It could be now.

... I'm not saying it will be two weeks from now. I'm just saying we're just making sure we're thorough."

Mayfield and Darnold have shared the reps with the first team over the past two

days, with Mayfield seeming to have a better overall command of the offense and success in the 11-on-11 periods against New England's defense.

But Darnold has shown flashes of what made the New York Jets select him third overall in the 2018 draft, including him working to turn a busted play into a TD pass to DJ Moore in the back of the end zone during two-minute drill work Wednesday.

"We're both doing everything we can to win the job," Darnold said. "I thought I improved a ton. I thought our whole team improved a ton, with their defense and the way that they fly around."

Neither quarterback has had a full complement of

playmakers this week, with running back Christian McCaffrey on a play limit and receivers Robbie Anderson and Terrace Marshall Jr. limited as well.

Still, Rhule has been impressed by what he's seen. "I think both guys have executed a ton," he said. "Not a ton of interceptions but have protected the ball well. The key situations — the low (red zone) and the two-minute — we've gotten done what we need to get done to a degree. So, I think a lot of good things." Rhule said he plans to mostly play his second- and third-team players in Friday's exhibition matchup with New England, though he didn't say who would get the start at quarterback.

Mayfield said he feels as comfortable with the playbook as he's had since arriving from Cleveland via trade in July 6.

"To be honest with you, I haven't been worried about when the decision's going to be made or any of that timeline wise," Mayfield said. "Just trying to put my head down and just handle it one day at a time. And that's been the mindset for both Sam and I. Just how can we be playing the best ball by the end of camp and just handle it correctly."

"Organizations go as their QB rooms go, and as long as we're leading correctly and we're supporting each other, good things are gonna happen."

For now, Rhule said they plan to stick to the plan they laid out prior to training camp.

"We're not winging it," he said. "We have a really good plan and I just don't feel at liberty to share it out of respect for the guys." Everyone else will just have to wait.

BOZEMAN OUT 2-3 WEEKS

Rhule said that the lower leg injury Bradley Bozeman sustained in Tuesday's practice session isn't as bad as they initially feared.

Bozeman could barely put pressure on his left leg and had to be carted off the field after the injury. □

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